

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Fall Machine Co Inc

New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership

New Hampshire Machine Shops Making the M.O.S.T. out of Federally Funded Training Program

Client Profile:

Fall Machine Company, Inc. was established in 1978 and specializes in CNC precision machining. The company has a presence in many markets including telecommunications, automotive, medical and aerospace. Fall Machine employs 15 people at its facility in Somersworth, New Hampshire.

Situation:

Fall Machine was experiencing problems finding people who were willing to work and learn the trade. Most of the students coming to the company from trade schools were largely interested in CAD work and not in operating the manufacturing equipment. Mark Duffy, Vice President, knew of the New Hampshire Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NHMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, through participation in a Lean course offered by NHMEP. During the event, he learned of the Machine Operators Skills Training (M.O.S.T.) program, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. He believed the program would provide the solution for the growing need for skilled machinists.

Solution:

Fall Machine was part of the first group to participate in the M.O.S.T. program in New Hampshire. Under this program, NHMEP partnered with local unemployment agencies which provide training candidates and handle pre-screening for basic math, reading and aptitude skills. Twelve candidates receive two weeks of intensive training on board the mobile training unit (MTU), a state-of-the-art, converted Winnebago that has been outfitted with twelve computer stations, a single station CNC machine and a small lathe. An instructor from NHMEP takes the students through ten eight-hour days of training modules, basic math, blue print reading, measuring and some hands-on work on the machines. There is no cost to the students or the participating companies for the training or the subsequent Lean training session that the companies receive for their employees. In turn, businesses agree to interview the candidates at the end of their training and offer paid on-the-job training (OJT) to the new employees. The machine shops receive new employees who have basic machine operator skills and can then customize any OJT to the specific tasks and machinery that the new employee will be involved with at their facility. Charley Lincicum of Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Mass MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, provided the two weeks of training and also developed the original curriculum for the program. As a result of the training, Judy Thompson was hired as a machine operator and currently mills parts that go into the tilt mechanism of steering wheels. Mark Duffy, Vice President of Fall Machine, said, "Judy is a steadfast and very reliable employee, and we are very happy to have her. She is an integral part of our second shift and is critical to the function of the company."

After the M.O.S.T. training was complete, Fall Machine employees participated in a Lean training event to give them an overview of the basic Lean tools and concepts. They have put several things they learned in the training to use in their facility. Fall Machine uses shadow boards for tools and post work

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

procedures at work stations. They also made some logistical changes such as rearranging machinery to improve flow and reduce travel time and distance. Materials are labeled and stored neatly and conveniently. The company was called upon to give feedback and ideas for improvements shortly after the program ended. Some of those ideas were incorporated in to subsequent training sessions as the program continues to try to meet the needs of area machine shops. "Customers like to hear that you are doing Lean," said Mark. "We need to measure our objectives and continue making small changes. It is all about continuous improvement."

Results:

- * Hired a machine operator.
- * Increased sales by 25 percent.

Testimonial:

"Part of the reason we wanted to participate in this program is because we have trouble getting semi-skilled employees to train. Having Judy come in with the basics saved us a lot of time. We will certainly use the M.O.S.T. program again."

Mark Duffy, Vice President